



Box 7530-00300, Nairobi, Kenya +254-711-444-219 sales@ecosandals.com
2201 Gilpin Ave, Wilmington, DE 19806 USA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 30, 2008

City-Wide Football Tournament To Promote Ethnic Harmony Nairobi Slum Neighborhoods Break Out Into Games of Football to "Kick for Peace"

NAIROBI, KENYA - Ecosandals, a community-based business based in one of Nairobi's poorest neighborhoods, today announced it was the lead sponsor of a first-ever football tournament and reconciliation event, "Kicks for Peace, sponsored by Ecosandals". "As Kenya has denigrated into ethnic killings," Ecosandals Project Director Becky Wachera commented, "we as human beings must all work together to stop the violence and begin the healing." In connection with over 100 community-based and non-governmental organizations, led by Reality Tested Youth Programme (RYP), Kicks For Peace will provide a forum for youth based in some of Nairobi's hardest hit communities of Mathare, Kibera, Korogocho, Huruma, Dagoretti, Kariobangi, Kwangware and Dandora to address continuing violence through dialogue, art and sport.

The opening match of the football tournament, which will include both a girls and boys tournament, will take place Saturday, February 9. It will be preceded by an opening ceremony organized by a diverse cross-section of Kenyans, each with their own message of ethnic celebration and unity. The ceremony will begin at 1 pm. at *Huruma Football Grounds*, Nairobi, and, like all the matches in the tournament, will be free of charge and open to the public. Discussion forums will take place at numerous locations each day of the tournament. Each of the over 100 teams in the tournament will include players from a diverse range of ethnic communities.

"Stunning ethnic tragedies have struck Nairobi's poorest communities," stated Calvin Kangera, the RYP founder and the co-founder of the Mathare Youth Sports Association, stated. "While you read of such tragedies, our news should be filled with the message of hope and ethnic tolerance that we see among community youth here. Drama, music, dialogue and sport are among the tools we will use throughout the tournament to recognize difference, while celebrating our unity. We thank one of those fine community-based organizations, Ecosandals, which gives valuable employment and ownership opportunities to area youth, for giving us all the opportunity to focus on our ability to work together, to play together, because we are all Kenyan."

The United Nations Environmental Program, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, AMREF-Dagoretti Child Needs Project, Carolina for Kibera, Kenya Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund, Alive and Kicking, Chombo Africa Foundation and Sadili Oval have each committed to contributing valuable assistance to "Kicks for Peace, sponsored by Ecosandals".

Ecosandals produces and sells unique and durable footwear globally, both online at [Ecosandals.com](http://www.ecosandals.com) and offline, providing a meaningful source of employment and ownership to residents of Korogocho and its environs, enabling an extraordinary level of income to go to the Kenyan sandal-makers.

<http://www.ecosandals.com>

"Kutengeneza akala, kuinua maisha"

"Making sandals, enriching lives"

Ecosandals is a community-based footwear brand started in the Korogocho slums in 1995 by a New York-based lawyer. Ecosandals trains Korogocho-area youth, without regard to ethnicity or gender, to design, produce and sell environmentally-friendly footwear, which are sold online and around the world. It has been profiled globally by CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera.

RYP works with over 2,500 individuals in 50 community-based organizations in Huruma and Mathare focusing on sports, environment, culture, and small enterprise activities. RYP operates a Community Development Centre in Huruma, funded by the French government, that offers direct services to member CBOs.

Contacts:

Calvin Kagera, RYP, +254-724-829786, kmbuguaca@yahoo.ca

Matthew Meyer, Ecosandals, +254-711-444219, matt@ecosandals.com

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